



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

Monday, Oct. 6, 2003

## Grassley, Senate Colleagues Urge Mexico to Drop Barriers to U.S. Farm Products

WASHINGTON – More than half of Senate Finance Committee members, led by Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman, today sent a letter to Mexican officials urging them to fulfill their trade obligations and stop imposing barriers to U.S. agricultural products. The bipartisan senators' letter followed a series of steps from Grassley, most recently a hearing on Sept. 23 at which a series of U.S. agricultural producers described the harm imposed on their industries by Mexico's intransigence.

The senators' letter went to Ernesto Derbez, foreign minister; Fernando Canales, secretary of the economy; and Javier Bernardo Usabiaga Arroyo, secretary of agriculture. The text follows.

October 6, 2003

Dear Secretary Usabiaga:

As members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, which has primary jurisdiction over trade policy in the U.S. Senate, we are writing to express our growing concerns regarding barriers being imposed by the Government of Mexico to U.S. agricultural exports.

Our concerns were only heightened following testimony provided to the Finance Committee during a September 23, 2003, hearing on this subject. During the hearing, we heard from a broad swath of U.S. agriculture exporters, including producers of high fructose corn syrup, corn, beef, rice, pork, and apples. We are also aware that U.S. dry bean producers are being negatively impacted by Mexican trade policies. While each of these industries is unique, they all share a common complaint – the Government of Mexico appears to be engaging in a systematic practice designed to stop their exports from entering the Mexican market.

This persistent pattern not only hurts U.S. agriculture, but also undermines our strong trade relationship, harms Mexican consumers, and could have a chilling effect on investment in Mexico.

As members of the Finance Committee, we value sound trade relations between the United States and our trading partners. We are willing to work with Mexico to resolve trade problems between our countries. At the same time, however, we recognize that the worth of trade commitments depends upon the willingness of countries to abide by them. Accordingly, it is our hope

that Mexico will come into compliance with its agricultural trade obligations in the most expeditious manner.

Sincerely,

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Charles E. Grassley

Chairman  
Committee on Finance

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Max Baucus

Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance

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Orrin G. Hatch

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Kent Conrad

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Craig Thomas

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James M. Jeffords

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Rick Santorum

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John F. Kerry

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Jim Bunning

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Blanche L. Lincoln

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Don Nickles